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Identical letters dated 19 December 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

The Security Council, in adopting its resolution 2328 (2016), requests the United Nations Secretariat to formulate a number of urgent steps, which should be depoliticized and professional in nature. This is required to guarantee effective implementation of the resolution, monitored by the Security Council, for the benefit of the civilian population in the Syrian Arab Republic.

It is very important that the resolution unequivocally reaffirms the strong commitment of the members of the Security Council to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, and that it underscores the need to respect the norms of international humanitarian law and the United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian emergency assistance in its implementation.

In this context, we assume that the Secretary-General, when formulating the relevant modalities for United Nations work on the ground, including security arrangements, will undertake the necessary consultations and coordination with all interested parties, primarily with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, as requested in paragraph 7 of the resolution.

In addition, we note that the provision on respect for international humanitarian law and the United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian emergency also entails the fair distribution of humanitarian assistance across the country, without the arbitrary designation of focus areas.

On the whole, the adopted resolution is an "add-on" to the practical work that is already underway on the ground, since direct humanitarian assistance had also been provided to the population of Aleppo prior to its adoption. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have been involved in these efforts. In addition, the ICRC staff is also involved in monitoring and facilitating the evacuation from eastern Aleppo. Earlier, the Russian Federation had repeatedly called for the participation of United Nations agencies in those efforts as well.

We do not rule out the possibility that, following the completion of the main phase of voluntary evacuation of civilians, there will be a need to evacuate an

additional number of people who may want to leave the area. In this case, additional resources may be required, and then the mechanism established in resolution 2328 (2016) will be needed.

It is with this understanding that the Russian Federation has decided to support this decision of the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) V. **Churkin**